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The girls of Dragalevtsy had no way of proposing to a boy. The girl waited and, if nobody proposed to her, she remained unmarried.

Sometimes unmarried young people had sexual intercourse. If the boy did not want to marry the girl, then she told her parents; the boy was brought before the *Obshtina* and, if the charge was proved, was made to marry the girl. As one peasant said in matchless understatement: "In such cases they do not have a happy life."

One such case occurred during my sojourn in the village and was an exciting topic of conversation. A girl with an unsavory reputation, in the hope of gaining a certain young man as a husband, accused him of having had intimate relations with her; the parents, too, insisted upon his marrying their daughter. He refused and the matter was taken up before the village court, where several of his friends swore that they likewise had had intimate relations with the same girl. Whether the friends swore truthfully or falsely was still a matter of doubt in the minds of many villagers, but the young man was freed from all responsibility in the matter.

Chastity ranked high in the scale of village social values. Even though some couples had illicit relationships before they married, they were running a grave social risk. Public indignation was especially great in the case of illegitimacy. A girl giving birth to an illegitimate child was forced to leave the village. On this subject I had the following conversation with one of the more respected villagers:

"Where does the girl go if she is driven out of the village?"

"She goes to Sofia because she's a bad girl."

"Do the villagers try to find out who the father was and punish him for his part?"

"The father? Why should they? The girl is to blame, not the man."

"Are many illegitimate children born in the near-by villages?"

"In my time [the last thirty-five years] there have been two in Bistritsa, one in Dragalevtsy, and none in Simeonovo."

There was no particular stigma attached to being a widow or a widower, but the village mores decreed that, when remarrying, widows had to choose widowers, and vice versa. The explanation for this went back to the villagers' belief of the afterlife. They thought of